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# NEWSLETTER

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Thanks To: New MAC Board Members, Laurie Hasbrook

Bruce Rasmussen, Editor  
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Seven year itch? Maybe, but we here at the MAC are very excited as we enter our 7<sup>th</sup> year. We're pleased with the way our community has grown and evolved from its humble beginnings in August 2009, thanks in a big part to you and your support. As always, our Mission Statement continues to keep us busy 1) Keeping you connected to Minikani, your "summer homeland", 2) Giving you opportunities to give back to Minikani, 3) Supporting current Minikani programming, and 4) Helping to preserve the Minikani traditions.

Already in the planning stages are our annual **Holiday Event** (Saturday December 19, 2015) in Milwaukee, our very popular **Dinner Around the World** with a date and locations T.B.D., and a **Service Day** at Minikani where you can help give back to camp, and lots of opportunities for you to visit Minikani and support the 2016 summer staff.



We also plan to take a close look at our membership structure and how we can continue to grow in numbers and encourage more contributing members to support our goals.

In the end, it all comes down to keeping you connected to Minikani and the friends you've made there. Please keep reading your emails, checking our website, and encouraging all your camp friends to do the same. As always, we need you now more than ever. Thanks for being a member of the Minikani Alumni Community.



## New MAC Board Members

Here is a list of the newest board members who have volunteered to help with all of MAC's plans and activities for the coming year. Feel free to share your ideas, concerns, and future plans for the MAC with them.

### Sean Demet (deme0068@gmail.com)

I participated in the LT Program from 2001 to 2003 and was on staff from 2004 to 2008. In addition to summers in the Boys Unit and Explorer Unit, I was Waterfront Director (2007) and OLT Director (2008). My younger brother David Demet was the most recent WSA director and my youngest sister Julie Demet is an incoming LT 3 and a junior at DSHA.

Currently, I've been a resident of Nashville since February 2014 and I am currently a Project Manager at AAI Environmental Corporation.

### Ryan Derus (rderus@gmail.com)

Started going to camp during the summer of 1995 when I was 8. Besides a BU counselor, I was the Gun & Run Director and Explorer Unit Director.

Currently I work at the Blood Center of Wisconsin as a Project and Lean Specialist. However, I focus more on data and financial analysis, present results to the executive team and make recommendations depending on the outcome of each analysis. I practice eliminating waste (Lean) and work with operations to do so. Lastly, manage projects here and there depending on need.

### Jen Hovergorst (jenpeterson25@yahoo.com)

Years at camp... Started as a camper in 1980... LT in '88 and ended as an LT 3 in 90. That was my last position and not my choice to leave. I am busy working in Field Compensation at Northwestern Mutual and raising my daughter, Sophia, who has Ad Staff aspirations. I have been studying martial arts for 5 years. Looking forward to serving the alumni community and contributing in whatever way I can!

### Brett Youdavit (Andrews) (brettradio@gmail.com)

At Minikani through 2001 (I think). Was a BU counselor for two summers and worked on the range and craft porch. Currently working for iHeartMedia in Milwaukee/Chicago/St. Louis/Phoenix/Portland.

### Michael Luckey (luck1791@gmail.com)

I was a camper from winter camp '01 (my first summer was '02) until '05. I was in the 2006 LT group. I did two years as a counselor, then two years as Waterfront Director and a year as Explorer Director. My final summer was in 2013.

Nowadays I'm living in Madison, working in the capitol building as a Legislative Assistant for a member of the State Assembly. I've always been interested in politics - Eddie Molenda can tell stories about his time as my counselor during the "Camp Election" All-Camp day in summer '04. I'm very excited for the opportunity to join the MAC Board.



### Anna Patrick (annatationapatrik@gmail.com)

I started going to camp in 1998 and my last year of camp was in 2008. In addition to being in the unit my LT3 year, I was also a kitchen III. The summer of 2008 I was a GU Counselor and Gun & Run was my skill! My first year as a Counselor also rotated us into Day Camp & I enjoyed getting to know that side of camp & seeing Day Campers transition into the unit for overnight all in one summer!

Today, I am concluding a Master's Degree from Marquette/MCW and working in the IT/Business Solutions Department at QuadMed, a subsidiary of Quad/Graphics, and I also work as an Educator for Lululemon Athletica in Brookfield.



◆ Mark your calendars now for the upcoming Holiday Event on Saturday, December 19, 2015.

◆ Jenny Risch, Amanda Hendrickson, and Anna Patrick are co-chairing our Holiday Event. If you want to get in on the ground floor and help with the planning, please volunteer with them via email: [jennyrisch@gmail.com](mailto:jennyrisch@gmail.com), [hendrickson.amanda@gmail.com](mailto:hendrickson.amanda@gmail.com), [annatationapatrik@gmail.com](mailto:annatationapatrik@gmail.com)

◆ How are we doing? Contact us at [minikanistafflodge@gmail.com](mailto:minikanistafflodge@gmail.com). We'd love to hear from you.





Summer Staff Enjoys 24 pizzas, compliments of the MAC.

### Thanksgiving Prayer

Oh God, I thank you for my friends and all the joys they have brought. I thank you for the happiness of sharing work and problems and laughter and for the joy of adventuring and learning together. I thank you for the chance to love and be loved, not because of cleverness or goodness, but in spite of faults and differences.  
Avery Brooke

### WINTER CAMP – December 27-30, 2015

Ages 7-15

What a way to bring the year to a close! Spend four days and three nights in a beautiful winter wonderland, catching up with old friends and making new ones. Your days will be filled with classic winter activities such as snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and snow sculpture — plus traditional camp activities like archery and arts and crafts! In addition to all of the fun camp activities, we will also take a trip up to Sunburst Ski Hill where campers can choose to go tubing or skiing for the day.

For information go to

<http://www.minikani.org/yeararound/winter>

## Upcoming Minikani Events

### ◆ Fall Family Fun Day

Sunday, October 18, 2015

Noon - 3pm

Bring the whole family for a fun-filled day at Camp Minikani as we celebrate the fall season! Along with family-friendly activities like the climbing wall and archery, visitors will have the chance to learn more about camp, while taking a tour of our beautiful camp. Then join us for a cookout and meet our amazing team!

Plus, registration for Summer 2016 will be open during the event. Reserve your day camp spot before online registration opens to the public!

Adults: \$10

Kids: \$5 (Under 3 - FREE)

### ◆ Holiday Cookie House

Saturday, December 5, 2015

9am - 1pm

Take a break from the holiday rush and enjoy a fun, relaxing day at Camp Minikani decorating cookies and gingerbread houses with friends and family. We supply the decorating supplies and freshly baked cookies. You supply the creativity... and leave the mess to us!

\$20 Gingerbread House

\$25 Premade (noneligible)

Gingerbread House

\$26 Gingerbread House &  
Dozen Cookies

\$8 Dozen Cookies

Reservations recommended! Call 262-251-9080 to reserve your spot today!





## Dear Counselor,

By Jelise Ballon

*(The following is a letter written by Jelise Ballon to the camp counselors at Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp, Fort Valley, VA, where her three children attended summer camp. She writes a blog at <http://neitherheightnordepth.com>)*

Dear Camp Counselor,

September is here. Backpacks are packed, pencils sharpened, and yellow school buses wait at the corner. Orange and brown leaves are starting to cover our yard and the sun is coming up later and going to bed sooner. Alas, summer is officially over.

Despite the excitement and energy that surrounds a new school year, there is one bit of summer that lingers in our house; one topic that resurfaces at the dinner table, in the car, and at bed-time. Of everything my kids did and experienced this summer (and it was a lot) the one subject that comes up again and again is camp.

While you camp counselors have returned to your college dorms and apartments or your regular jobs, my children are still singing those same songs 100 times in a row, re-enacting that silly skit and arguing over who gets to play what part, and trying to teach their school friends how to play spit and color tag.



Out of 12 weeks of summer vacation they only spent two with you, but they are the two weeks that live on in our house. And sure, they did some pretty cool stuff at camp. I mean, who wouldn't remember a week of canoeing, horseback riding, or an afternoon of swimming? But really, in the midst of the stories and the songs and the laughter, what I hear most are your names.



I hear stories told over and over about how Jake did this, or Sarah said that. My kids will say to each other, "remember when Dan and Tori did that skit?" and bust out laughing while trying to explain it to me (for the 78th time) and I still won't get it, but they will laugh hysterically anyways. Then they'll ask, "Mom do you think Nick/Julie/Dalton/Jayne will be my counselor next year?"

Your names are spoken with a tone of admiration, love, and familiarity as if you've been in their lives forever, not someone they just met in June. You are the coolest/funniest/smarest/nicest/craziest person they know. And I get it. I was a camper for 7 years, and thought the same thing about my counselors. Twenty-five years later and I'm still friends with some of my camp counselors, and probably my biggest regret is never getting the chance to be one of you.

You know the part that gets me the most? It's that when I picked my kids up at the end of week 8, you had just as much energy and joy as I saw in you back in week 2. And because no one ever became a camp counselor to get rich, I know that joy and energy must be because camp is in your soul. It is inside of you and fills your heart and overflows into the space around you. It's contagious. My kids have caught it. Camp is inside of them. Not just while they are there for those two weeks, but every day throughout the entire year.



### Please update your address changes.

Have you changed your email address in the last couple of years? Do you have multiple email addresses that you seldom check? Has it been a while since you've heard from the MAC? Have you moved to a new address or changed your name? Do you know an alumnus who doesn't hear from us? If you can answer "yes" to any of these questions, please let us know so we can still communicate with you. It's very easy to do. Simply go to our website and click on "Contact Us", or email us at ([minikanistafflodge@gmail.com](mailto:minikanistafflodge@gmail.com))



## Alumni Weekend

By Bruce

Although it was a little damp and cool, this year's Alumni weekend proved to be a great time for all. Over 100 people enjoyed the fellowship, activities, friends, meals and comradery at Minikani. Late Saturday afternoon Julie Tolan, Chief Executive of the Milwaukee YMCA spoke to many of us and thanked us for being there and wished us the very best. She also called us a wonderful "family".

That got me thinking – we were like a family, enjoying a family reunion together. We were all there, from the youngest newborn to the oldest (me!). There was the 'crazy uncle', the 'fun-loving aunt', and lots and lots of kids running around having fun. There were some members of the 'family' who you haven't seen for a while, and others you haven't even met, but we were all united, not through a 'bloodline', but through a 'Spirit', which some would say is even stronger than blood.



A large family of caring people. This was evident throughout the weekend, but one incident stands out in my mind: We were in Fireside Lodge waiting for the evening Campfire to start. One of the many toddlers present walked



Baby strollers were a common sight at the 2015 Alumni weekend

across the 'stage', more intent in using her new-found mobility than paying any attention to the crowd watching her. But then she continued past the group and through the doorway that lead to the Craft Kitchen, where possible dangers were lurking for her. Without a word, half a dozen adults sprang to their seats to 'rescue' her from possible injury – an instinct of caring shared by all present.

I like this family. I like it a lot. Unlike Groucho Marx's quote "I don't care to belong to any club that will have me as a member", I am glad to include myself as a member of the Minikani Alumni Family.

Next Minikani Alumni Community Weekend will be in August, 2017.





# SpotLight

## On Alumni

### Laurie Hasbrook

Laurie got her first taste of Minikani when her family participated in a Family Camp week-end in the late '60s. She started as a summer camper around age of 12, and she *loved* Minikani from the moment they drove down Amy Belle Road. Her last summer at Minikani was in 1982. She was a counselor, Girl's Unit Director, and LT Co-Director.

#### ◆ Do you have any particularly 'fond' memories of camp?

When I close my eyes and think about camp I am immediately transported back – walking to breakfast with my cabin across the field when it was wet with dew in the morning, spending lazy hours at the stable, lunch in rowboats on Lake Amy Belle, camp-outs on Sumac Hill, watching for the monster on the shores of Mud Lake, hiking to the Apple Orchard, visiting the Nature Lodge, opening mail during rest time, singing in the Dining Hall, Ethel, telling ghost stories and then being terrified to walk to the KYBO, breaking camp along the Wolf River, jumping off a bridge into a river on an LT training trip and being rescued from the rapids on this same trip by the editor of this fine publication, getting to drive the camp van to church on Sundays, Raggers ceremonies, vespers...

I also remember Steve, a counselor, talking to a group of us campers as we worked on outdoor

camping skills. He was a conscientious objector and this was during the Vietnam War. He was a sweet, gentle soul. I remember feeling like a whole new part of life was opening up. Someone who was living his convictions was asking me to think about what *I* thought.



Laurie & Perry at  
MiniKamp 1982

#### ◆ Did you develop any special skills while at camp?

Being at Minikani really helped me develop both empathy and spiritual openness. Camp was a place that allowed people to be authentic – I certainly felt I was accepted as myself. As counselors and staff we were entrusted with assuring that campers, and fellow staffers, were welcome and respected in our camp community. Camp is also where I experienced a real connection with nature, and discovered that spirituality was a gift within – not limited to (and sometimes not found in) religious expression or identification.

#### ◆ How did you make the transition to the "real" world?

I have not yet made the transition to the "real" world. Camp showed me the restorative powers of being

in harmony with nature and those around me. Camp was an alternative lifestyle – where community is central, cooperation makes things work, and individual successes happen within that context. That model has certainly served me well thus far.

I refuse to accept that war is an inevitable part of human existence, and I reject the notion that we cannot save our planet from ecological destruction. That said, it's a struggle -- I'm a congenital worrier, extremely judgmental, and fairly despairing these days about the fate of the world. Lucky for me, my wacky home life is a great distraction, and Lake Michigan is just a few blocks away – it's *my* Lake Amy Belle -- a place of natural beauty in my urban backyard.

#### ◆ What are you up to now?

I have lived in Chicago since 1988. For the record – I *love* my city! I am an adjunct faculty member in the World Languages/ELL Department at Harold Washington Community College in downtown Chicago where I teach ESL classes part-time.



I spend non-teaching hours volunteering at my kids' schools, being an advocate for an Iraqi refugee family, and, currently, fighting cuts to special education in the Chicago Public Schools. I am a member of St. Gertrude Parish (where I'm the Saturday "MOFI" – *Minister of First Impressions*; i.e. receptionist) and recently joined, and am active with, *Tzedek Chicago*, a progressive Jewish Synagogue.

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◆ **Do you find that things you learned at camp are helpful in your current life?**

Yes, things I learned at camp – to be open to the unexpected, to find the abundant beauty in simple moments, to live simply, to work with others for the common good, and to respect the different paths of those around me – have served me very well thus far. I am still learning.

◆ **Your family is very important to you. Can you tell us about them?**

My beloved husband of 21 years, Sam Guardino, works at *Thresholds*, which provides housing, healthcare, advocacy, and employment for people living with mental illnesses. He is a fabulous partner and a great Dad. His sense of humor and daily “*I love yous*” keep me afloat. We have three fabulous sons: Stephen, a college sophomore, Louis, a “first year senior” at an occupational high school for students with developmental disabilities, and Marcus, a freshman in high school. Sam and I are parents through birth, adoption, and guardianship. It’s been a wild journey (as any parent of teenagers knows...), but we’re surviving! Our household also includes Brandon, a close friend of the boys, who is a college freshman. Nikki and Spike, our cats, are generally aggravating, but right when I’m ready to “accidentally” leave the back door open they jump in my lap and purr... Louis would love a dog, and once the cats have gone to kitty heaven, I’m ready!

◆ **Anything else you’d like to share?**

My brother Steve, sister-in-law Kristin and their wonderful kids keep the Hasbrook-Minikani connection current. I’ve been happy



to reconnect with other Minikani alum via Facebook. I hope to make one of the alumni gatherings in the near future. I’d love to walk the trails and visit the old haunts with you. Warmest greetings to all!



## Nature Notes

By Bruce

### Squirrels

Minikani is home to 5 different ‘squirrels’ that I know of – 1) The eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) common to backyards, parks, and woods, 2) the streamlined ground squirrels found in Norris Field, 3) chipmunks that abound in the Minikani Woods, 4) flying squirrels that sleep during the day in beech trees around Explorer Hill, and 5) the woodchuck or groundhog that burrows in the farmer’s field. There are over 265 species of *Sciurus* around the world, but most of us are most familiar with the gray squirrel. (Occasionally they may appear with pure white (albino) or black fur, but they are all the same species.)

Squirrels seem to keep going 24/7. As pure opportunists, they’ll break into your attic any time. They’ll jump out in front of your tires just to jolt you. They’ll leave cracked acorns on your lawn when they think it looks too neat. Have overflowing birdfeeder problems? Need an attic pilfered? Count on these ubiquitous critters to show you a thing or two. Watch them skitter, hop, run, jump and fly as they test not only their might and moxie, but also your patience. But all that action makes them fun to watch. If you don’t believe me, do a YouTube search for “Squirrel Video” and see what you come up with.



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Squirrels have wonderful adaptations that help them survive. Their big tails are used primarily for balance by enabling them to dart around quickly without falling. And they can easily jump 20 feet. Should they step amiss, the tail is also used as a parachute when they fall and a cushion when they land. In addition, tail gestures are a form of communication with other squirrels. (We do not know if the term "tattle tail" was invented by a squirrel.) When the tail is flicked, it means, "Get away." And lastly, those fluffy tails serve as excellent blankets in the winter.

Squirrel's hind legs are double jointed, which helps them run both up and down trees. Their front toes are very sharp, and this helps them grip the tree trunk. Their four front teeth (incisors) continuously grow at a rate of about 6 inches a year, which are constantly ground down by chewing nuts and bark. The gray squirrel mostly eats nuts, seeds and fruit, but they are omnivores. They have been known to eat insects, snails, mushrooms, bird eggs and animal carcasses when other food is scarce.

When winter comes, squirrels seem to be ready. In autumn they are very busy caching food. Caching, also called hoarding, is a behavior characterized by storing stashes of food for later. Squirrels usually do this by putting their food in a shallow hole and covering it up. They don't remember all these "storage units," and some of the forgotten seeds and nuts they leave behind will grow and become future trees. The stashes that are remembered will serve as food when resources are scarce in winter. Squirrels don't hibernate, but they do spend more time in their comfy nests when it is cold outside. Some live in burrows in old trees, and others make a nest called a "dray" that looks like a large bird nest made of leaves and branches.

Squirrels are good parents, having two litters per year. The babies, called "kittens", take about 3 months to grow from an inch long to adult size. You won't see these kittens out and about with their parents, they are fed milk and are protected from predators and kept safely in the nest. A group of squirrels, by the way, is called a "scurry".



Gray squirrels are sometimes called "living fossils" because they haven't changed much in the last 37 million years. But that's OK with me. As I get older, I enjoy watching them outside, and don't mind sharing a little bird seed with them. The Native Americans use the squirrel as a symbol for preparation, trust and thriftiness, three characteristics I find enviable in humans as well as squirrels.



Just when you thought we had some down time between New Year's Eve and Valentine's Day, here's something worth putting on your calendar: Thursday, January 21, 2016 is **Squirrel Appreciation Day**. This day gives us a moment to reflect on the wonders of the family Sciuridae. It's an opportunity for you to use all the new facts and vocabulary you've just learned – "scurry", "dray", "kitten", etc. And maybe they deserve a little extra special treat in the bird feeder on their 'day'. Just remember: When frightened, squirrels dart back and forth to confuse their predators. This doesn't work so well with cars, however, so most city squirrels don't live much longer than a year. Let's hope none of them have to 'check out' on their special day!

